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Is There a Pattern?

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The countries that experienced a 'coloured revolution' between 2000 and 2005 – Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan – were not distinguished by their levels of economic development, as political modernization theory suggested. Nor did they distribute incomes more unequally than other countries at the same level of development, as class analysis would have posited. By contrast, perceptions of the political system, and of its levels of corruption and responsiveness, were more closely associated with a series of irregular regime changes that had generally been precipitated by a 'stolen election'.

There has been little agreement about the changes that swept across the post-communist world in the early years of the new century. Which cases, for a start, should be included? The contributors to this collection offer a variety of suggestions: not only Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, but perhaps also Armenia (in 2008) and other cases in which a popular movement that might have led to a similar outcome was suppressed by the exercise of force – as in China in 1989 and Uzbekistan in 2005, and on a less dramatic scale in Belarus and Azerbaijan. Arguably, all of these were in any case a subset of a much larger phenomenon, the popular movements of the 'third wave' that had been overturning authoritarian governments across the globe ever since the Portuguese overthrew the Salazar dictatorship in 1974.¹ For some, it was more useful to think of regime change in the post-communist world as a 'fourth wave', with its own distinctive characteristics.² It was clear, at a minimum, that the irregular changes of government that are considered in this collection have to be understood within a wider context, and within a larger and still unfolding process of 'democratization'.

There is no more agreement about which label is appropriate. They soon became known as 'colour' or 'coloured revolutions'. But the very first, in Serbia in 2000, was a 'bulldozer' revolution; there were coloured revolutions

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outside the post-communist world entirely, including the ‘carnation revolution’ in Portugal and a ‘blue revolution’ in Kuwait; and the coloured revolutions themselves had a variety of designations. The ‘tulip’ revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 began with ‘pink’ or ‘yellow’ demonstrators, and in its early stages it was variously ‘lemon’, ‘silk’ or ‘daffodil’; the Ukrainian oppositionists chose ‘orange’ as they expected their main effort to take place in the run-up to the presidential election in October when the centre of Kyiv would be lined with autumnal chestnuts, but by the time they took to the streets to contest the second round in late November the foliage had long gone.³ The other part of the designation, ‘revolution’, is even more problematic. The post-communist countries had already experienced a revolution, in the view of many, one that incorporated social and economic as well as political transformation. Were the changes of the early years of the new century significant enough to be called a ‘revolution’ if they involved no fundamental changes of this kind? Yes, if revolution meant no more than the irregular replacement of a political leadership; but no, if it meant deeper and more far-reaching change. Perhaps, indeed, we need an entirely different term, such as David Lane’s ‘revolutionary coup’, to capture both the irregular nature of the leadership changes that had taken place and their limited implications for the wider society.

Still more difficult is the question of causality. Even if we limit ourselves (as in this collection) to the post-communist world, there were few obvious features that distinguished the countries that had experienced a ‘coloured revolution’ from those that had not. They were varied in size and population. Georgia, Serbia and Ukraine were predominantly Christian, whereas Kyrgyzstan was Muslim. Some were geographically close to the Western liberal-democratic world and to each other, which was relevant to discussions of ‘contagion’, but not Kyrgyzstan. In any case, even if Georgia, Serbia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan had common features, they would not necessarily be of explanatory significance unless they were distinctive to these four countries, separating them out from other states with which they were otherwise comparable. If the Kremlin was to be believed, there was indeed nothing these four countries had in common except that they had all been targeted by an expansionist American government that was determined to consolidate its victory in the Cold War. Wherever they could find a post-communist leadership that could be dislodged by public pressure, most easily through a contested election, the US leaders would do their best to bring it about; in some cases they had succeeded, but in others – Uzbekistan, Belarus, perhaps Russia itself at the time of the Duma election of 2007 – they had apparently been rebuffed.

In what follows we look more closely at these questions of causality, seeking to draw more general conclusions about the sequence of irregular executive changes (and non-changes) that are considered elsewhere in the collection. In the first place, we test ‘economic’ explanations. Were the

countries that experienced 'coloured revolutions', for instance, particularly rich or poor, their 'revolutions' a consequence of social and economic change that had undermined an authoritarian politics? What about 'social' explanations: was it that the countries that had experienced a 'coloured revolution', whatever their level of development, were less egalitarian in the way they distributed the resources they had available – their incomes, in particular? And third, we ask about 'political' explanations. Perhaps, all other things being equal, the countries that had experienced 'coloured revolutions' were neither richer nor poorer, neither more nor less egalitarian, but simply more badly governed. Were their political systems more corrupt, their courts less independent, and their adaptive capacity accordingly more limited? Our focus is primarily on the 'classic' coloured revolutions: the Serbian in 2000, the Georgian in 2003, the Ukrainian in 2004 and the Kyrgyz in 2005. But our concerns are more broadly comparative: what is it about these countries that was not just common but also distinctive, separating them out from others at a similar level of development that had not experienced this kind of irregular change of executive?

Explaining Coloured Revolutions: 'Economic' Approaches

The view that a more developed economy would eventually find its reflection in a more decentralized, consultative form of politics had its origins in a long-established body of theory that distinguished between 'traditional' and 'modern' forms of social organization.⁴ It was formulated most influentially within the comparative politics literature in Seymour Martin Lipset's 1959 article on the 'social requisites of democracy', and set out more fully the following year in his book on *Political Man*. Democratic countries, Lipset pointed out, were wealthier, more industrialized, more urban and more educated; they had more doctors, motor cars and newspapers. Indeed the differences were 'striking on every score'.⁵ This, for Lipset, was more than a coincidence; and the crucial link was cross-cutting cleavages. The more developed the society, the more complex its networks of affiliations, and the more likely it was that preferences would be distributed in different ways on different issues, rather than overlapping and reinforcing each other. A society of this kind, accordingly, was less likely to be divided into rival blocs and more likely to be characterized by shifting patterns of agreement and disagreement, allowing differences to be reconciled through a continuous process of negotiation. This was an ideal, indeed perhaps it was the *only* viable basis for a democratic politics.⁶

By the 1960s and 1970s the same arguments were being used to underpin a more far-reaching claim, often expressed as 'political modernization': the view, as Robert Dahl put it, that 'because of its inherent requirements, an advanced economy and its supporting social structures automatically

distribute political resources and political skills to a vast variety of individuals, groups and organizations'.⁷ This meant that the monopoly of political power that communist leaders enjoyed would eventually be undermined by the programmes of social and economic development they themselves had sponsored. The more they succeeded in transforming the social and economic structures of the countries over which they ruled, the more their political skills would be threatened with obsolescence. But if they sought to retain their dominance by force alone they would be confronted by the enormous cost of managing a modern society in this anachronistic way. The change from Stalinism to post-Stalinism, Dahl suggested, was already a 'profound step towards liberalization'; further steps were inescapable as a centrally dominated political system became increasingly difficult to reconcile with the pluralistic pressures of a modern economy and society.⁸ Many were prepared to speak of these as nothing less than 'inevitable forces of history' that would undermine authoritarian governments around the world, and communist governments in particular.⁹

Were 'coloured revolutions', accordingly, a consequence of economic maturity, of a level of development that led to social complexity of a kind that even post-communist governments were unable to accommodate? In Table 1 we consider the countries that had experienced a 'coloured revolution' alongside their gross domestic product (GDP) comparators – other countries worldwide that had a similar level of GDP per head expressed in purchasing-power parities (for present purposes we have arbitrarily chosen a 10 per cent margin either above or below each of the four 'coloured revolution' countries).¹⁰

On the face of it, level of development explained very little. To begin, all four of the 'coloured revolution' countries were below the global GDP per head average. The richest of the four was Serbia, at about \$6,000 a head at the time of its 'coloured revolution' in 2000, but this made it no more than a 'lower middle income' country in World Bank terms. The poorest of the four was Kyrgyzstan, a 'low income' country in World Bank terms; Georgia and Ukraine, although more prosperous, fell into the same category. There was little basis, on these figures, to suggest that a 'coloured revolution' was some kind of corollary of economic development: it was more likely to take place in 'low income' countries than in their richer counterparts, and in poorer rather than more affluent post-Soviet republics (there was nothing of the kind in the richest of the post-Soviet republics, Estonia, which was the only one the World Bank described as 'upper-middle income').

Nor was there any indication across comparable groups of countries that a particular level of development was the crucial variable. There was no 'coloured revolution', for instance, in the other counties that had reached the same level of development as Serbia; at most, it could be argued that the 1996 election in Romania, at which its post-communist government lost power, had been the equivalent of a coloured revolution, but it was conducted entirely through

TABLE 1
COLOURED REVOLUTIONS AND GDP COMPARATORS, C2000

Country	Population (mn, 2000)	Level of development	GDP/head (\$ PPP)	Irregular executive change 1995–2005?
Serbia	11	LMC	6004	Yes
Romania	22	LMC	5654	No
Colombia	42	LMC	5692	No
Macedonia	2	LMC	5935	No
Bulgaria	8	LMC	6153	No
Georgia	5	LIC	2072	Yes
Nicaragua	5	LIC	1871	No
Armenia	4	LIC	2026	No
Azerbaijan	8	LIC	2203	No
Ukraine	50	LIC	3271	Yes
Bolivia	8	LMC	3153	No
Jordan	5	LMC	3214	No
Syria	16	LMC	3296	No
Paraguay	5	LMC	3355	No
Namibia	2	LMC	3465	No
Guatemala	11	LMC	3506	No
Kyrgyzstan	5	LIC	1328	Yes
Sudan	35 (est.)	LIC	1227	No
Senegal	10	LIC	1241	No
Laos	5	LIC	1285	No
Moldova	4	LIC	1287	No
Nigeria	127	LIC	1289	No
Vietnam	79	LIC	1413	No
Uzbekistan	25	LIC	1444	No

Sources: GDP in purchasing power parity per head of population is derived from the World Development Indicators database (see <<http://www.worldbank.org>>); the figures show 'coloured revolution' countries and GDP comparators that had over 1 million population. Levels of development are as reported in the *World Development Report 2000/2001* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.334–5; LMC = lower middle income country; LIC = low income country. Irregular executive change 1995–2005 is derived from the *Statesman's Yearbook* and standard reference sources.

established constitutional procedures. Ukraine was about half as prosperous as Serbia, and (at this time) a 'low income' country in World Bank terms, but it was again the only country at its level of development that had experienced a 'coloured revolution'. Bolivia, which was one of its comparators, had been unstable for more than a century, but when a new and rather different president came to power at the end of 2005 it was through a peaceful and democratic election. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan were all former Soviet republics with a similar level of development and indeed a similar geographical location, but only Georgia had experienced a 'coloured revolution' (although there was continuing instability in Azerbaijan throughout 2005). The poorest of all was Kyrgyzstan; but its level of development was very similar to that of

Moldova, Uzbekistan and other GDP comparators, none of which had experienced the same kind of irregular regime change. Nor was there an obvious explanation in other attributes of development. In all the former Soviet republics, for instance, there had been a fall in GDP throughout the 1990s as they accommodated the shock of the collapse of the USSR; but it was Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan that had experienced a coloured revolution, not the other four post-Soviet republics that had reached a broadly similar level of development. So economic contraction at a given level of development was hardly a predictor of irregular regime change. Life expectancies were over 70 in Georgia, which suggested an advanced society, but they were just as high in its two post-Soviet neighbours, which had not experienced the same kind of irregular regime change. Public health spending was higher in Georgia than in Azerbaijan, which was also suggestive of a more advanced society, but lower than in Armenia and Nicaragua, and all of them spent about the same proportion of their GDP on education. And so forth. In all of this there was little to suggest that the countries that had experienced 'coloured revolutions' were in any way more developed than other countries with a similar level of GDP per head that had not experienced a regime change of a comparable kind.

Explaining Coloured Revolutions: 'Social' Approaches

If countries that had experienced a coloured revolution had the same level of development as others that did not, it could hardly be their level of development that made the difference. Was it, perhaps, the way in which resources were distributed? In particular, were societies in which income and similar resources were concentrated in the hands of a small minority more likely to experience a coloured revolution than comparable societies in which resources of this kind were distributed more equally? Were the coloured revolutions, in effect, a revolt against the incumbent elites that had taken over the power and privilege of their communist predecessors, whether the societies themselves were richer or poorer? Or perhaps against the way in which post-communist leaderships had apparently found common cause with local oligarchs, such as Leonid Kuchma and his son-in law Viktor Pinchuk in Ukraine, at the same time as the living standards of ordinary citizens stagnated? In Serbia, as a reaction to a 'sultanistic' ruling group, within which the Milošević family were among the principal beneficiaries?¹¹ In Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and elsewhere, as a response to a society in which social differences had been rapidly widening since the enforced equality of the communist period had come to an end?

This was an explanation that drew on much older theories of revolution, dating back to the Greeks,¹² which conceived of political change as the

outcome of a shift in the wider society and in particular of a change in the balance of class forces. All existing societies, in the Marxist version of this interpretation, were based on exploitation, which meant that those who owned productive resources appropriated the value that was produced by those who worked for them. But the gap between the two would steadily widen as the owners of wealth accumulated an ever-increasing share of the value of national output, and the society would become increasingly polarized as intermediate groups moved up to join the owners or were forced down into the ranks of those who worked for them. Gradually, it was suggested, workers would become more resentful of the way in which the value of what they produced was appropriated by a property-owning minority, and would seek to replace this exploitative relationship with a society in which the fruits of their labour were shared by the society as a whole.¹³ The central element in all such explanations was social inequality. The greater the disparity in living standards, the more determined ordinary people would be to overthrow the system that generated it; equally, the more reason there should be for modern social scientists to expect an irregular change of government wherever inequalities of this kind were at their greatest.

There were considerable ambiguities in any explanation of this kind, particularly in a post-communist context. Marxist theories of revolution assumed private ownership of the means of production, and revolution was the process by which their ownership changed hands. Did they have much application to a 'coloured revolution' in a society that was already capitalist and in which questions of ownership were not directly involved? And to an insurgency led, at least in the Ukrainian case, by a 'gas princess', the spectacularly wealthy Yulia Tymoshenko? Were Marxist theories, in any case, based on absolute measures of inequality, or relative ones? Marx had 'never claimed that the proletariat would become immiserised in any absolute sense',¹⁴ which suggested that it was the distribution of incomes rather than their absolute level that was the central determinant. But he also insisted that a society based on private ownership of the means of production would become increasingly polarized between those who worked for a living and those who appropriated the value of what they produced. In any event, it was no simple matter to establish the evidence in a post-communist context. Was it sufficient to consider money incomes, for instance, without considering other forms of income – such as food produced from personal allotments, or special housing arrangements for leading officials? Were money incomes themselves being paid in full and on time? And what about the distribution of wealth, much of it held abroad and in secret?

Internationally comparable data are most readily available on the distribution of money incomes, and the degree of concentration is typically measured in two ways: the Gini coefficient, which expresses the difference

between an absolutely equal and an absolutely unequal distribution (scored 0 and 1 respectively); and the decile ratio, which expresses the relationship between the earnings of the most prosperous and the least prosperous 10 per cent in a given society. We set out these differences for the four 'coloured revolution' countries in Table 2, setting them beside the results for their GDP comparators. To assist comparisons, the Gini coefficients are expressed in percentage terms, so that the lower the score, the greater the degree of equality; the same is true of the decile ratio, which is lower where the incomes of the rich are closer to the incomes of the poor, and higher when the differentials are greatest. Our concern is the difference that appears to

TABLE 2
COLOURED REVOLUTIONS AND SOCIAL EQUALITY, C2000

Country	Gini coefficient	Decile ratio	HDI rank	HDI rank – GDP rank
Serbia	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
Romania	30.3	7.8	63	+6
Colombia	57.5	42.7	68	+4
Macedonia	34.4	n.d.	65	+20
Bulgaria	26.4	5	62	+18
Georgia	37.1	12.0	81	+34
Armenia	44.4	15.3	76	+41
Azerbaijan	36	9.8	88	+24
Nicaragua	60.3	70.7	118	+4
Ukraine	29.0	8.4	80	+22
Bolivia	44.7	24.2	114	+6
Jordan	36.4	9.1	99	–1
Syria	n.d.	n.d.	108	–1
Paraguay	57.7	91.1	90	+4
Namibia	74.3	n.d.	122	–54
Guatemala	55.8	29.1	120	–19
Kyrgyzstan	34.6	8.4	102	+12
Sudan	n.d.	n.d.	139	–7
Senegal	41.3	12.8	154	–11
Laos	37	9.7	143	–1
Moldova	40.6	13.7	105	+21
Nigeria	45	24.9	148	+9
Vietnam	36.1	8.4	109	+19
Uzbekistan	45.4	26.9	95	+24

Source: Adapted from the *Human Development Report 2002* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.149–52, 194–7. Gini coefficients have been converted to percentages; the decile ratio shows the incomes of the top 10 per cent of earners divided by those of the lowest 10 per cent. In both cases the lower the score, the greater the equality of income distribution. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite measuring 'average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development – a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living': *Human Development Report 2007/2008* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave–Macmillan, 2007), p.367; the lower the score, the higher the level of human development. GDP rankings are based on purchasing power parities.

be made by income inequality when GDP is held constant, which also helps to minimize the biases that are introduced when incomes are compared across countries at different levels of development. Were countries with greater levels of inequality on this basis more or less likely to experience irregular regime change than their GDP comparators?

What we find is that, if anything, the countries that experienced coloured revolutions were more *equal* than other countries at the same level of economic development. No Gini coefficient is available in the World Development Indicators dataset for Serbia in 2000. But Georgia, in the same year, was only slightly more unequal than Azerbaijan in terms of its Gini coefficient and more equal than Armenia and Nicaragua, neither of which had experienced a 'coloured revolution'. The same was true if income distribution was considered in terms of the decile ratio (Nicaragua, in both cases, was spectacularly more unequal than its GDP comparators). Kyrgyzstan was more equal than *all* the other countries at a similar level of economic development that had not experienced a coloured revolution, including two other former Soviet republics, Moldova and Uzbekistan, and two countries that were still under communist rule, Vietnam and Laos; and it was more equal than *all* its GDP comparators in terms of the decile ratio, apart from Vietnam where the figures were identical. Ukraine, again, was markedly more equal in its income distribution than *all* the other countries at a similar level of development, whether the comparison was expressed in terms of the Gini coefficient or the relationship between high and low earners. But in none of those other countries had there been a 'coloured revolution'.

Not only were 'coloured revolution' countries, if anything, more equal in their income distributions; they were also more likely to outperform their comparators on other measures of social welfare, including life expectancy and educational attainment (these are combined with GDP per head in the UN-sponsored Human Development Index (HDI), the rankings for which are set out in Table 2). In Georgia, HDI performance was better than in Azerbaijan and Nicaragua, although it was slightly worse than in Armenia; in Serbia, no figures of any kind are available. In Ukraine, however, HDI performance was better than in *all* six countries with a comparable level of GDP per head (it was also the only one that had claimed to have eliminated illiteracy); and in Kyrgyzstan, HDI performance was better than in *all but one* of the seven comparator countries. *All* the 'coloured revolution' countries for which figures are available had a level of human development that was above their GDP ranking; among their GDP comparators, nine had a higher human development ranking than their GDP would have suggested, but in the other seven cases the reverse was true (Namibia had an HDI ranking that was a spectacular 54 points below its GDP ranking).¹⁵ Once again, the countries that had experienced a 'coloured revolution' were typically those

that had been the most successful in raising the health and educational standards of ordinary people at the same time as they distributed incomes more equally than other countries at a similar level of economic development.

Overall, there was strikingly little evidence that the countries that had experienced a 'coloured revolution' were ones that had allowed a small minority to appropriate a disproportionate share of national resources, or in which governments had been particularly neglectful of the needs of ordinary citizens. If anything, the opposite: it was *more equal* societies with a *better* level of health and educational performance than their comparators that were more likely to have experienced irregular regime change. But neither could it be concluded that a greater degree of income and welfare equality was the reason these particular societies had opted for irregular regime change. For a start, there were important mediating factors. African and Latin American societies were more unequal than European societies at any level of development, whatever their political regime. And former communist-ruled countries were more equal than their GDP comparators, whether or not they had experienced a 'coloured revolution', because of their communist inheritance. This meant that their starting-point was one in which income differentials had been deliberately restricted, and in which health and educational provision had for many years been given a high priority. It also appeared that less-urban societies were more likely to distribute their resources equally than others at a similar level of development, although 'culture' (understood as traditional religion) made no obvious difference; certainly, there was no evidence that a 'Christian' or 'Muslim' background was of particular significance.

Explaining the Coloured Revolutions: 'Political' Approaches

If level of development and even the distribution of resources had little apparent explanatory value, perhaps political factors would have more to tell us about what prompted a series of irregular changes of government. These, after all, were popular movements in which the central issue was typically a 'stolen election'. In Serbia, the parliamentary elections of September 2000, widely regarded as falsified, led quickly to street demonstrations and the occupation of parliament, and then to further elections at which the Democratic Opposition led by Vojislav Koštunica won a large majority. In Georgia, the parliamentary elections of November 2003 were followed by demonstrations and the storming of parliament, and then by the resignation of Eduard Shevardnadze and early presidential elections at which Mikheil Saakashvili was overwhelmingly successful. In Ukraine, it was the apparent falsification of the second round of the presidential election in November 2004 that led to the 'Orange' demonstrations and a re-run of the second round in which Viktor Yushchenko was the clear winner. In Kyrgyzstan,

it was the apparent falsification of the parliamentary elections in February and March 2005 that led to the flight and resignation of Askar Akaev, and then to an early presidential election at which Kurmanbek Bakaev was chosen as his successor.

Apart from this, there was a widespread view that governing elites had been discredited by the unashamed pursuit of their own advantage. The evidence of focus groups, cited by White and McAllister in their contribution, is that the 'Orange' movement in Ukraine drew a great deal of its support from a visceral hostility to 'Kuchmism' and to the 'corruption and humiliation' that had been characteristic of his period of government. Kuchma's authority had in any case been seriously damaged by the Gongadze affair, and the entire ruling group had been compromised by a succession of scandals. One of the most spectacular involved former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko, a mentor of Yulia Tymoshenko, who fled to the United States in 1999 but was detained on his arrival and eventually sentenced to nine years' imprisonment on charges of fraud and money laundering. In Georgia, corruption had become increasingly institutionalized during Shevardnadze's presidency: the police were 'little more than an organized crime ring', the education system was increasingly degraded as 'poorly paid professors and dishonest university officials sold grades and college degrees to students of the newly rich corrupt business class', and government officials 'grew rich accepting bribes from business interests or stealing tax revenue and foreign assistance money'. By the end of his presidency, it was 'virtually impossible to find an area of Georgian life [that was] untainted'.¹⁶ There were similar issues in Serbia and Kyrgyzstan.¹⁷

A particular contribution to the events themselves was made by young people, and by the forms of communication with which they were most familiar: e-mails, texts, spontaneous street 'happenings', rock concerts, and other forms of peaceful mass action. The first and most influential of the youth movements was Otpor ('Resistance') in Serbia, formed at Belgrade University in 1998 and a potent force during the September 2000 presidential election campaign with its slogan 'Gotov je' (He's finished).¹⁸ In Georgia the youthful protesters called themselves 'Kmara' (Enough); they were broadly aligned with Saakashvili and the political opposition, but spent more of their time 'criticizing the regime and creating a sense that there was a large anti-Shevardnadze movement brewing'. One of their chosen methods was to spray-paint 'Kmara' on walls, buildings, streets and whatever public space they could find through the country, combining this with more conventional demonstrations and an aggressive media campaign, and making use of the internet to reach supporters inside and outside the country.¹⁹ In Ukraine, the youthful protesters were called 'Pora' (Enough), which itself incorporated two distinct strands: a 'Black Pora', stronger in the west of the country, and a 'Yellow

Pora', stronger in Kyiv and more closely associated with the Yushchenko campaign.²⁰ In Kyrgyzstan, the youthful protesters were called 'KelKel' (New Epoch); in Belarus (where they had less success), 'Zubr' (Bison).

Here, perhaps, was some evidence of an association between 'development' and the overthrow of post-communist governments. And yet it was also an uncertain association. Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan all had a higher proportion of their population enrolled in university-level education than their GDP comparators (once again, no Serbian figures are available),²¹ which appeared to suggest the availability of a pool of youthful activists. But there was no clear indication that 'coloured revolution' countries were distinctive in the opportunities they provided for young people to interact and coordinate their actions. Compared with its neighbours, Georgia had fewer mobile phone subscribers than Azerbaijan and fewer internet hosts and mainline telephone subscribers than Armenia, neither of which had experienced the same kind of irregular regime change. Kyrgyzstan had the same number of internet hosts as Moldova, but fewer mainline telephones and mobile phone subscribers; Ukraine had more internet hosts than all its GDP comparators apart from Namibia, but fewer mobile phone subscribers than anywhere but Syria.²² Nor could it be suggested that youthful protest was some kind of automatic result of a given level of student numbers or communications technology. It was also the result of funding, much of it from outside (in Georgia, for instance, youthful activists were 'trained and advised by the Liberty Institute and funded by OSI [George Soros's Open Society Institute]'; in Ukraine, the protesters were funded by a whole series of foreign foundations, and the same sources paid for the exit polls that helped to undermine the official election results).²³

In any case, what was crucial was that the youthful protesters found public support; and that in turn depended on how the incumbent regime was perceived. In particular, a perception that the existing regime was corrupt appears to have been important, and that more conventional means of holding it to account were inaccessible: the courts, the media, public demonstrations, or the ballot box, if it appeared that the results of an election were likely to be falsified. Indeed, it was the attempt to deprive ordinary citizens of this ultimate sanction, through 'stolen elections', that was the most obvious cause of the public dissatisfaction that led to the overthrow of the governments that had perpetrated them. Measures of the quality of governance are inherently more problematic than physical indicators such as school enrolments or hospital beds. But they continue to improve, and if they converge on a conclusion it is likely to be more than an artefact. In what follows we look first of all at measures of 'corruption', and then at the complex of measures developed under the auspices of the World Bank to capture the 'voice and accountability', the 'effectiveness' and the 'rule of law' that are characteristic

of the political systems with which we are concerned. Once again, we are interested in GDP comparators. Did the countries that experienced a 'coloured revolution' diverge in any consistent way, on these measures, from other countries that had a similar level of development but had not experienced the same kind of irregular regime change?

The most widely used measure of corruption in its various forms is the 'perceptions index', produced by Transparency International of Berlin and reported annually since 1995.²⁴ Transparency International was the first body to attempt to devise an index of this kind, and its inquiries were originally focused on the liberal democracies, but they became increasingly comprehensive and by 2008 some 180 states were included. From 1996 the exercise has included Russia, and from 1997 Ukraine. As Transparency International itself pointed out, these were reports on the extent to which corruption was perceived to exist among public officials and politicians, not necessarily on its 'objective' level (corruption itself was defined as the 'abuse of entrusted power for private gain'). The index drew on the experience of businessmen in each of the countries concerned, combined with assessments by country analysts, averaged over a number of years so as to moderate the effect of unusual fluctuations. Perceptions, it was acknowledged, were an imperfect measure of an ambiguous phenomenon; but they were found in practice to have a very high level of validity, and in any case they were typically combined with other measures in a manner that helped to improve the reliability of any one of these indicators taken by itself (what was sometimes called 'triangulation').²⁵

No figures are available for Serbia in 2000, on the eve of the overthrow of Milošević. But the evidence is otherwise strongly consistent with the hypothesis that 'coloured revolution' countries were distinctive in the extent to which their public life was believed to be corrupt and their politicians beyond democratic control (see Table 3). Georgia, for instance, stood at 124 out of 133 on the corruption perceptions index that was reported for the year 2003, shortly before the overthrow of Shevardnadze's presidency. None of its GDP comparators was at a lower point; Azerbaijan was seen as equally corrupt, but Armenia was at 78 and Nicaragua at 88, with much better scores. Ukraine, a year later, was at 122 on a list of 146, which was the same as Bolivia and Guatemala and better than Paraguay (140) but worse than all its other GDP comparators. Kyrgyzstan, in the same year, was at the same point on the scale, which meant that it was at the same level or below all its GDP comparators apart from oil-rich Nigeria (144). Serbia, in a parallel exercise conducted by the World Bank,²⁶ was similarly found to have the worst figures for the 'control of corruption' of all its GDP comparators: it scored no more than 8 on a percentage scale on which zero represented absolute corruption, well below Macedonia (36), drug-ridden Colombia (34), Romania at 47 and Bulgaria, which was at the global

TABLE 3
'COLOURED REVOLUTIONS' AND THE QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE

Countries	Corruption	'Voice'	Public services	Rule of law
Kyrgyzstan and GDP comparators (2004)	Laos Senegal Vietnam Uzbekistan= Moldova= Sudan= Kyrgyzstan = Nigeria	Senegal Moldova Nigeria Kyrgyzstan Vietnam Laos Sudan Uzbekistan	Senegal Vietnam Kyrgyzstan Moldova Laos= Nigeria= Uzbekistan Sudan	Senegal Vietnam Moldova Kyrgyzstan Laos Uzbekistan Sudan Nigeria
Georgia and GDP comparators (2003)	Armenia Nicaragua Azerbaijan= Georgia =	Nicaragua Georgia Armenia Azerbaijan	Armenia Georgia Nicaragua Azerbaijan	Armenia Nicaragua Azerbaijan Georgia
Ukraine and GDP comparators (2003)	Jordan Namibia Syria Bolivia= Guatemala= Ukraine = Paraguay	Namibia Bolivia Paraguay Guatemala Ukraine Jordan Syria	Jordan Namibia Bolivia Guatemala Ukraine Paraguay Syria	Jordan Namibia Syria Bolivia Ukraine Guatemala Paraguay
Serbia and GDP comparators (2000)	Bulgaria Romania Macedonia Colombia Serbia	Bulgaria Romania Macedonia Colombia Serbia	Bulgaria Colombia Romania Macedonia Serbia	Bulgaria Romania Macedonia Colombia Serbia

Sources: Figures for corruption are adapted from the Transparency International index for Georgia (2003), Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan (2004) and their respective comparators; Laos, not reported in 2004, is interpolated from the 2005 index; figures for Serbia and its comparators in 2000 are adapted from the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators. Other figures are adapted from the same source.

midpoint (50). Throughout, 'coloured revolution' countries had low scores; and often, if not always, they had scores that were below those of their GDP comparators.

The evidence that is available from other measures of the quality of governance is also set out in Table 3. 'Voice and accountability' measures the 'extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media'. Here again, Serbia was the worst of its group of GDP comparators with a score of 28, below Colombia (30), Macedonia (38), Romania (60) and Bulgaria (68). Georgia was better placed (36), above Azerbaijan (23) and Armenia (31) but below Nicaragua (48). Kyrgyzstan (with a score of just 20) was in the middle of its group of comparators; Ukraine (30) was below most of them. There were very similar results when the various groups of

countries were examined for their 'governmental effectiveness' – the 'quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies'. None of the 'coloured revolution' countries was at the top of its group: Kyrgyzstan (25), Georgia (27) and Ukraine (35) were somewhat above or below the midpoint; and Serbia (18) was at the bottom.

A further and particularly important measure seeks to capture the 'rule of law' – the 'extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, in particular the quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence'. Kyrgyzstan, again, was at the midpoint within its group of GDP comparators (22), but well behind Senegal (46), Vietnam (40) and Moldova (34). Ukraine (at 23) came above two Latin American countries but below all other comparators; Serbia and Georgia were at the bottom of their respective groups, with a spectacularly poor 10 points each. These, it has to be accepted, were subjective measures, but they were based on a wide range of sources including surveys of individuals and domestic firms as well as international agencies, and the margins of error involved were lower than in exercises that used more conventional data. They certainly delivered a clear verdict: in not a single instance did a 'coloured revolution' country come at the top of its group of GDP comparators; in not a single instance did a 'coloured revolution' country reach as high as the global midpoint (the highest single score was Georgia's 36 for 'voice and accountability'); and in six of the 16 rankings they were at the very bottom. This contrasted starkly with their equality of income distribution and their ability to deliver a high level of 'human development', in which they were typically at the top of their respective rankings and outperforming states at a higher level of economic development. In general, on the basis of this preliminary analysis, it appears safe to draw the conclusion that social revolutions have social causes; but that irregular regime changes are more likely to originate in the particular characteristics of the regimes themselves.

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NOTES

1. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp.21–5.

2. See, for instance, Michael McFaul, 'The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World', *World Politics*, Vol.54, No.2 (2002), pp.212–44; Lincoln A. Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), p.2. Another suggestion was a wave of 'democratic revolutions' dating from the overthrow of President Marcos in the Philippines in 1986: see Mark R. Thompson, *Democratic Revolutions: Asia and Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.2.
3. Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine's Orange Revolution* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2005), pp.72–3.
4. For a representative discussion see, for instance, Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell Jr., *Comparative Politics: System, Process and Policy*, 2nd edn (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), pp.68–76, which identifies Durkheim, Tönnies and Weber as the intellectual architects of this developmental perspective.
5. See Seymour Martin Lipset, 'Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy', *American Political Science Review*, Vol.53, No.1 (1959), pp.69–105 (p.75). The larger account is *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (London: Heinemann, 1960; enlarged edn, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).
6. Lipset, 'Some Social Requisites', pp.94–103.
7. Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1971), p.77.
8. *Ibid.*, pp.64–5, 76–9, 218.
9. See, for instance, Lucian Pye, 'Political Science and the Crisis of Authoritarianism', *American Political Science Review*, Vol.84, No.1 (1990), pp.3–19 (p.6).
10. Here and elsewhere data have generally been drawn from the World Development Indicators database (see <<http://www.worldbank.org>>); similar data are available in printed and electronic form in the annual *World Development Reports*, archived at <<http://www.worldbank.org>>. On GDP comparators, see particularly Alexander J. Groth, *Comparative Politics: A Distributive Approach* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), and later work. This is an opportunity to acknowledge the debt I owe to Professor Groth for identifying the potential of this approach and for the discussion of its application in which we have engaged over many years.
11. The term used in Thompson, *Democratic Revolutions*, p.89.
12. Aristotle, for instance, wrote that 'when there is no middle class, and the poor are excessive in number, troubles arise, and the state soon comes to an end': see Stephen Everson (ed.), *Aristotle: The Politics and The Constitution of Athens* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.109. My thanks to Andrew Lockyer for helping to locate this quotation.
13. The most comprehensive treatment is Hal Draper's *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, 4 vols in 5 (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1977–90). Marx's is 'the most influential theory of revolution in the past hundred years', in the view of A.S. Cohan, *Theories of Revolution: An Introduction* (London: Nelson, 1975), p.68.
14. David McLellan, *The Thought of Karl Marx*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1980), p.178.
15. *Human Development Report 2002*, pp.149–52.
16. Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy*, pp.25–6; see also p.74.
17. On Serbia, see note 11 above; on Kyrgyzstan, see, for instance, John Heathershaw's contribution to this collection, and G.O. Pavlovsky (ed.), *Kirgizskii perevorot: mart–aprel' 2005* [The Kyrgyz upheaval: March–April 2005] (Moscow: Yevropa, 2005).
18. On Otopr, see, for instance, Vladimir Marković, 'Otopr (Resistance) in the Struggle Against the Serbia–Yugoslav Regime', *The South Slav Journal*, Vol.21 (2000), pp.107–10.
19. Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy*, p.54.
20. Wilson, *Ukraine's Orange Revolution*, pp.73–5; see also more generally Valerie J. Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, 'Youth and Electoral Revolutions in Slovakia, Serbia, and Georgia', *SAIS Journal*, Vol.26, No.2 (2006), pp.55–65.
21. Figures derived from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre, at <<http://stats.uis.unesco.org>>, accessed 4 June 2009.
22. *Human Development Report 2002*, pp.186–90.
23. Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy*, p.54; Wilson, *Ukraine's Orange Revolution*, pp.75, 186–7.

24. See <<http://www.transparency.org>>, which archives the annual reports to date. The reports also exist in published form: see, for instance, *Global Corruption Report 2008: Corruption in the Water Sector* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
25. Larger methodological issues of this kind are considered in Johann Lambsdorff, *The Institutional Economics of Corruption and Reform: Theory, Policy and Evidence* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
26. This measure is drawn from the Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators, archived at <<http://www.worldbank.org>>, last accessed 3 June 2009. The figures currently cover 212 countries from 1996 to the present; see <<http://www.govindicators.org>>.